



GEAR UP in Washington State

Background

Low-income, disadvantaged students are less likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. Many mistakenly believe that college is too expensive or otherwise out of their reach. Others want to go to college but don't know how to navigate the higher education system. With one counselor for every 509 students, schools often can't provide the one-on-one guidance that many of these students need.¹

Studies show that early intervention works. Students from low-income families who receive extra financial, academic, and social support are more likely to stay in school and go on to college.

In Washington State, 87 percent of those who participated in a five-year National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership (NEISP) program stayed in high school. About two-thirds of the students who began the program in 10th grade went on to college.

Program Overview

Through a \$15.6 million, five-year federal grant, the Washington State GEAR UP project is helping more students from disadvantaged backgrounds go on to college. The Higher Education Coordinating Board, the University of Washington and the Office of the Governor are jointly administering the state project.

¹ 1998-1999 School District Personnel Summary Report, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Direct Service to Students

Project staff offer the academic, social and financial support students need to pursue higher education. They provide academic preparation and tutoring, career exploration and information about college. Communities contribute time, space, and thousands of volunteer hours annually to help ensure the students' success.

Students come from low-income communities around the state with high numbers of at-risk youth. They generally are the first in their families to go to college.

The state program currently serves students in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Elma, Inchelium, Spokane, Tacoma and Wapato and will expand later this year to serve students in Seattle, Taholah, Yakima and Quincy. Four local GEAR UP partner-ship sites serve students living in Renton, Pierce County, the Lower Yakima Valley and the Mid-Columbia Basin area.

Building Partnerships

To broaden its reach and strengthen community/ education partnerships, the GEAR UP program also is overseeing the following early intervention initiatives:

 Hosting annual summer institutes at the University of Washington and field trips to other campuses to expose students to the college experience.

Creating publications about the importance of higher education, college planning and the availability of financial aid, and distributing them HIGHER

EDUCATION

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Phone: (360) 753-7800 Fax: (360) 753-7808 Email: info@hecb.wa.gov www.hecb.wa.gov to participating students in grades 7 through 12 and their families.

- Improving K-12 teaching and learning to help students develop the academic skills they will need for admission to and success in college.
- Offering institutes, seminars and training materials to help teachers improve classroom strategies, and infuse curricula with positive messages about higher education.
- Providing year-round support to GEAR UP students through the UW Outreach Partners. UW graduate and undergraduate students will serve as mentors to GEAR UP students statewide.

The UW Summer Institute

More than 1,000 middle and high school students from Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Elma, Inchelium, Lakewood, Renton, Pasco, Tacoma, Spokane, Wapato and Yakima will participate in the first Summer Institute at the University of Washington, August 14-18.

The 800 middle and 200 high school students will choose a major, attend classes, and sleep in the dorms. In addition, they will tour area colleges, shadow

professionals, and discuss career paths with leaders in business, government and the community.

UW Classes – Daily at various times.
Students will attend classes taught by UW professors on topics ranging from "How Airplanes Fly" to "DNA in You, in Court, in Medicine, and in the News."

Campus Tours – August 16, 2000 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Students will tour area college campuses, including Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, and Shoreline Community College.

Job Shadowing – August 17, 2000 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Students will shadow professionals, including UW President Richard McCormick.

Career Roundtables – August 17, 2000 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Puget Sound area professionals will talk informally with small groups of students about their career experiences and the education necessary for success. Professionals include an assistant attorney general, a public health nurse, and an advertising agency owner.